

This was the last of three flights Louisiana HonorAir made to Washington, DC this fall. It is the 20th flight to depart from Louisiana, which has sent more HonorAir flights than any other State to the Nation's Capital.

World War II was one of America's greatest triumphs but was also a conflict rife with individual sacrifice and tragedy. More than 60 million people worldwide were killed, including 40 million civilians, and more than 400,000 American servicemembers were slain during the long war. The ultimate victory over enemies in the Pacific and in Europe is a testament to the valor of American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. The years 1941 to 1945 also witnessed an unprecedented mobilization of domestic industry, which supplied our military on two distant fronts.

In Louisiana, there remain today about 30,000 living WWII veterans, and each one has a heroic tale of achieving the noble victory of freedom over tyranny. This HonorAir group had 41 veterans who served in the U.S. Army, 11 in the Army Air Corps, 33 in the Navy, 6 in the Marine Corps, 3 in the Merchant Marines, 1 in the Coast Guard, and 2 were a part of Women's Army Corps, WAC.

Our heroes, many of them from Southeast Louisiana, trekked the world for their country. They fought in Germany, Holland, France, Italy, Africa, Guam, Bougainville, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the Philippines, New Guinea, Japan, and Saipan. Their journeys included the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy.

One of our Army veterans fought on the front lines in Europe and was held as a prisoner of war. Another Army veteran was wounded in Bastogne and received a Purple Heart for his service.

One Army Air Corps veteran served in 37 combat missions between 1943 and 1945 as a B-24 tail gunner. One Army veteran served in Normandy during D-day.

Another Army veteran received five battle stars for his service. Yet another one of our Army veterans received a Purple Heart and five medals, including the Bronze Star Medal, for his service in Europe.

I am also proud to acknowledge that of the 97 veterans who visited Washington this past weekend, two were women who served our country with honor and distinction during World War II.

I ask the Senate to join me in honoring these 97 veterans, all Louisiana heroes, who visited Washington. We thank Louisiana HonorAir for making these trips a reality.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. WILLIAM McCORKLE

● Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, it is an honor to recognize Dr. William McCorkle, who after 52 years of extraordinary service to our Nation, is retiring from Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, AL.

In the words of Napoleon Bonaparte, "Victory belongs to the most persevering."

Dr. McCorkle is a person who has used his perseverance, determination, and forthrightness not only to personally succeed in the Army but more importantly to do what is best for our warfighters.

A 1950 graduate of the University of Richmond with a bachelor of science degree in Physics and a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Tennessee in 1956, Dr. McCorkle came to Redstone in 1957 from a position at Tulane University.

Not since Dr. Wernher von Braun has one man done more to promote rocket development at Redstone than Dr. McCorkle. Since he joined the Aviation and Missile Command, Dr. McCorkle has been a pillar in the aviation and missile research and development fields.

As director of the Aviation and Missile Research, Development, and Engineering Center, Dr. McCorkle is an internationally recognized leader in aviation and missile technology, and has been involved in virtually every Army rocket and missile development program since 1956. He helped build the very foundation that has made the U.S. Army's aviation and missile programs so successful.

Dr. McCorkle's efforts have been instrumental in taking engineering ideas and transforming them into weapon systems. Dr. McCorkle was key in the development of the Prototype Integration Facility which has transformed the Army's rapid response capability to meet the needs of the soldier in the battlefield.

This facility is on the forefront of providing our servicemembers with quick solutions to critical problems they currently face in combat. Dr. McCorkle's work on this initiative has led to the building of a world-class research program at Redstone Arsenal valued at over \$1.2 billion.

More importantly, he has dramatically increased rapid prototyping efforts that have led to significant advancements to unmanned aerial vehicles at use today in combat.

Dr. McCorkle has effectively championed the use and growth of unmanned aerial vehicles and the new capabilities that have increased their value in combat. In conjunction with the Air Force, Dr. McCorkle's team led the development of advanced technology to arm predator unmanned aerial vehicles with Hellfire missiles. This program is now one of the most successful weapon systems being used today in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Under Dr. McCorkle's guidance, aviation research has also flourished. The Aviation and Missile Research, Development, and Engineering Center is heavily involved in the research and development initiatives behind many of the most utilized Army helicopter programs, including those on the Apache, Black Hawk, and Chinook helicopters.

After the rapid development of blue force tracking, a new capability that tracks the location of friendly and hostile military forces, units overseas were able to install this technology directly in the field.

Continuously, throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, it was reported that blue force tracking systems were working flawlessly, even allowing troops to fly in formation during sandstorms and brown-out conditions. This is an invaluable advancement for our soldiers and Dr. McCorkle ensured it was delivered to our servicemembers in the field at a critical time.

Dr. McCorkle's work has significantly improved technology development and reduced the time to field equipment, ensuring our warfighters are the best equipped fighting force in the world. His work has also reduced the cost of these programs for the taxpayer.

Under his direction, the Aviation and Missile Research, Development, and Engineering Center developed the Department of Defense's Best Value Engineering Program, which has consistently achieved 70 percent of the Army Materiel Command's total savings and 30 percent of the Department's total savings. His Service Life Prediction Program has achieved over \$8 billion in cost avoidance.

Dr. McCorkle has been on the forefront of new technology to provide our warfighters with the best equipment and our nation the best defense from those who wish to threaten us.

Under his guidance and leadership, the Aviation and Missile Research, Development, and Engineering Center was consistently recognized as an Army Materiel Command Laboratory of Excellence and formally recognized as the Army's best laboratory eight times.

I thank Dr. McCorkle for his years of service to our Nation, the Army and, most importantly, the warfighter. He has been a genuine asset to both the Service and the warfighter.

In everything he did, Dr. McCorkle strove for excellence in himself and sought to inspire the same in those around him.

His leadership, experience, and expertise have advanced our rocket, missile, and aviation programs beyond what was ever imagined when he first came to work for the Army. I am proud to have worked with Dr. McCorkle for over 30 years, but I am even more honored to call him my friend.

Dr. McCorkle, I wish you and your wife Nancy the very best as you enjoy your well-deserved retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO GORDON J. JONES

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of Gordon J. Jones of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, who passed away on October 6. He was a man of great faith in God and had a strong conviction to serve his country, State, city, and Santee Sioux tribal community in many generous and selfless capacities.